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Rhode Island. Its Making and its Meaning. By IRVING BERDINE RICHMAN. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1902. Two vols., pp. xiv, 266; iv, 295.)

WE are at last reaching the time when the interest and importance of early Rhode Island history can be fully appreciated. It is now possible to do justice to Williams, Gorton, and the Antinomians without depreciating the orthodox Puritans. Rhode Island can be valued for the many and varied tendencies which it contributed to colonial life, and for the intensely human personalities who shared in its history. A number of valuable monographs have cleared away obscurities which, owing to lack of accessible records, attached to some phases of the history of the colony. Mr. Richman has availed himself to the full of the labors of his predecessors, both in Rhode Island history and in that of New England at large. He has also brought to his task a ready sympathy and an attractive style. These qualities, combined with not a little original investigation and generalizing power, have enabled him to write an excellent book.

To say that it is the best book yet published on early Rhode Island history is to give an imperfect description of its value. Nearly fifty years have passed since Arnold published his work. Not since then has so ambitious a task been undertaken in that field as the one which Mr. Richman has just completed. Arnold was a laborious investigator, but really was little more than an annalist. The author of these volumes has sought so to group his facts as to make them illustrate the fundamental tendencies which were operative in the life of the colony. The controlling tendency was individualism. That manifested itself in religion in the form of freedom of conscience, and in politics in democracy and independence of the local political units. With due reference to these forces, the events of Rhode Island history, general and local, are traced until the death of Roger Williams in 1683.

Among the facts which are brought out with prominence in the volumes are the following: the diversity of origin and belief among the settlers of this colony; the radical type of belief which was cherished by nearly all of them; the possibility of their coexistence under one government only on the basis of perfect religious freedom. Coming to the development of their political system, Mr. Richman properly lays emphasis on the fact that Rhode Island was formed by the union of originally independent towns. He traces the early history of the towns and the process by which they were brought into union. In doing this he clears up some points in the early relations between Pocasset (Portsmouth) and Newport, and throws light on the career of William Harris in Providence. The Coddington episode also falls into its proper place in the general history of the colony. Respecting Gorton and the town of Warwick there was nothing new to be said. Little that is new is said about Roger Williams, but a very true picture is given of the part which he bore in the founding of Rhode Island. The author seems to be fully

aware of the limitations of the man as well as of his great excellencies. One, however, wonders whether Mr. Richman has ever carefully considered the question, What first prejudiced the magistrates and clergy of Massachusetts against Williams? Was it his attack on the patent or his defense of toleration? Upon this depends largely one's view of the justice of their conduct toward him.

Had Mr. Richman attempted a comparison between Rhode Island and the other New England colonies, he might have exhibited some of its characteristics in a light even clearer than that which appears in his pages. The lack of territorial unity in that colony, as compared with Plymouth, Massachusetts, or Connecticut, would have appeared in bold relief. Its constant struggle to maintain its territorial integrity would then appear partly as a natural incident of its location. It might also be seen that it was the effort to preserve this integrity, to save themselves from being annexed by their enemies, which forced the jarring elements within Rhode Island into union. Under the first charter union was not compulsory; it was only permissible. Nothing could be clearer than the contrast between the relations in which the towns stood to the colony in Rhode Island and their position elsewhere in New England. It was reflected, as the author has shown, in the methods of legislation under the first charter. Rhode Island was a confederacy of towns and for a long time after its settlement secession was a possibility. The bearing of this on the Coddington episode the writer might possibly have made a little clearer.

But Mr. Richman has done his work well. His book is accurate and fair. His treatment approaches reasonably near to the standard of the present time and to the demands of the subject. He has wrought into his picture all the salient features of early Rhode Island development.

HERBERT L. OSGOOD.

The History of Enfield, Connecticut, compiled from all the public records of the town known to exist, covering from the beginning to 1850. Edited and published by FRANCIS OLCOTT ALLEN. (Lancaster, Pa.: Wickersham Printing Co. 1901. Three vols., pp. x, 1-912, index, lviii; 913-1904, index, cxxv; 1905-2653, index, lxxxix.)

THESE three handsome and massive volumes contain the entire documentary history of a Connecticut town. With these volumes at hand any one interested in local institutions could work out the development of town life in one particular community and could obtain a mass of evidence valuable not only for the study of local institutions as such, but also for the illustration of larger issues connected with the history of the state and the country.

Enfield owes this unique distinction of possessing her entire body of records in print to the devotion of a descendant of one of her leading families. Mr. Francis Olcott Allen, a retired business man of Philadelphia, desiring to raise a monument to the honor of the town of his